

TV Review: Dennis Quaid, Michael Chiklis Bring Blinding Star Power to ‘Vegas’

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on September 25, 2012 - 10:09am

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CHICAGO – There’s something still magical about the way that charisma can make faulty screenwriting or mediocre design easy to overlook. And I’m not even really saying that either of those are significant problems on “Vegas,” debuting tonight on CBS. Only that if they were, the incredible way that Dennis Quaid and Michael Chiklis hold your attention would make them simple things to ignore.



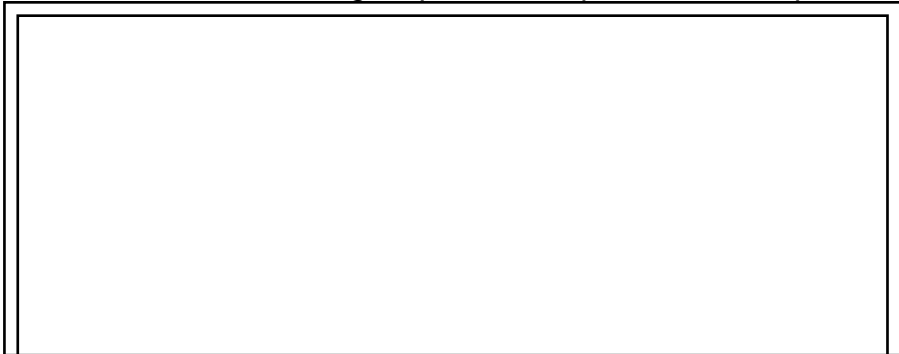
Television Rating: **4.0/5.0**

Watching it a second time (and the first time put it on my list of the most promising new shows of the Fall), I was even more impressed with “Vegas,” the story of the early days of the city of sin and the balance of power that turned it into what we know today. This is incredibly confident television, the kind that we too rarely see on the schedule nowadays. It’s not perfect but it never feels like it’s pandering to a lowest common denominator or fitting a mold to try and repeat ratings success. In other words, it’s not the derivative junk you’re used to seeing. It’s fresh, creative, and features two of the best actors on network television. I think it will be a hit. It should be.



Vegas
Photo credit: CBS

The great Quaid (having a Hell of a year with this and the festival buzz he’s been earning for Ramin Bahrani’s “At Any Price”) looks so comfortable in the boots of a role that he’s been waiting to play for years. Every once in awhile, an actor and a character just seem made for each other — James Gandolfini & Tony Soprano, Michael Chiklis & Vic Mackey, Dennis Quaid & Ralph Lamb. The lead in “Vegas” is an old-fashioned law man. We hear about how he valued justice so much in the Army that when he learned a medic was a murderer he turned him in instead of covering it up. He’s the perfect man to protect Vegas, the kind of guy who will solve a murder while rustling cattle.





Vegas
Photo credit: CBS

Lamb's counterpoint in "Vegas" is Vincent Savino (Chiklis), a smooth-talking, suit-wearing, fist-throwing tough guy who knows that Las Vegas is close to Deadwood in the way that it's mostly up for grabs for whoever is willing to take it. Both Lamb and Savino are merely the central figures in what will clearly be a complex story of the founding of a city, from its political figures to the showgirls who sleep with them.

Other central characters in this world of money and murder are A.D.A. Katherine O'Connell (Carrie-Anne Moss) and Lamb's helpful brother Jack (Jason O'Mara). O'Connell is often stuck in the middle of Lamb's unusual crimefighting techniques while Jack will clearly be the assistant in his investigations.

What investigations, you say? It's hard to tell from one episode exactly how "Vegas" will play every week but the first installment includes a murder mystery when a body is found on a nuclear testing site. Will every week be like "CSI: 1960"? Would that be a problem? I'm not sure yet. I don't want "Vegas" to become just another crime show. There's potential here for more than that. However, if the show does this kind of murder material correctly, balancing the mystery-of-the-week with the overall development of Vegas, it wouldn't be that bad a thing. At times, "Vegas" feels like "L.A. Confidential" in the way it presents a glittery world with darkness around every corner.

I do wish CBS would let it get a little more dark. There are times where there's a bit of grit missing from "Vegas" as even the violence doesn't have the same punch as it would if this show as on AMC or FX. Don't be afraid to push the envelope here. I think the cast is strong enough that viewers will go with the show if the producers are willing to go as dark as this story demands.

It all comes back to Quaid and Chiklis. Their scenes together are spectacular (Chiklis DEVOURS lines like *"This is my house. You don't come into my house unless you want me in yours."*) but it's really Quaid's show, at least in the premiere. He's simply fantastic here (and O'Mara is quite good as well...jury still out on Moss, who feels miscast in the premiere). Awards for lead actor in a drama are hard to come by given the overall strength of that category in the '10s but there's a new name in the mix, and, believe it or not, he's not on cable.

"Vegas" stars Dennis Quaid, Michael Chiklis, Jason O'Mara, and Carrie-Anne Moss. It premieres on Tuesday, September 25, 2012.



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